

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release September 10, 1979

David Klinger 202/343-5634

### DUCK STAMP PRICE INCREASE TO OFFSET RISING LAND PURCHASE COSTS

Hunters and conservationists who have been purchasing the 1979-80 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp this year have noticed a difference in the stamp over previous years--a \$7.50 purchase price, a \$2.50 increase over the previous issue.

In 1978, the Congress approved legislation mandating the Secretary of the Interior to charge \$7.50 for the stamp in any year in which migratory bird conservation funds for the previous year had been fully obligated.

This year's price hike is intended to offset spiraling land purchase costs which must be met in order to acquire vital habitat for migratory waterfowl. The price increase took effect July 1, 1979.

The stamp, popularly called the "Duck Stamp," is required of everyone 16 years of age or older who hunts ducks, geese, swans, or brant. The stamp sales create a continuing source of revenue for Federal acquisition of waterfowl habitat.

The "Duck Stamp" was created by Congress in 1934 when it passed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. Its original purchase price was \$1; Congress raised the price to \$2 in 1949; \$3 in 1959; and \$5 in 1972.

Since 1934, more than 75 million "Duck Stamps" have been sold, providing over \$210 million in revenue used to purchase more than 2.3 million acres of habitat. Each year, more than 2.4 million hunters, conservationists, and a growing number of stamp collectors buy the popular stamp.

The rising cost of land, particularly prime waterfowl territory, prompted the rise in price to \$7.50. The increase is expected to yield approximately \$5 million in additional revenue which is used by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct this vital program.

Spotted strategically along the flight paths of migratory birds, the refuges and waterfowl production areas the "Duck Stamp" buys give sanctuary to great numbers of ducks and geese that pass through, winter, or breed there. Over 300,000 acres of wetlands are estimated to be lost each year to development, however, and acquisition with "Duck Stamp" revenue is one way to insure that some of this habitat is preserved.

In addition to the valuable work the "Duck Stamp" performs for wildlife conservation, the process by which each year's design is chosen is also unique. The annual competition from among hundreds of wildlife artists across the country constitutes the only art contest regularly sponsored by the Federal Government. These colorful stamps constitute the longest running, annually issued series of stamps in revenue or postage stamp history.

X X X

INT 6184-79  
FBI WASH DC